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COMMUNITIES SHAPED BY EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY ENTREPRENEURS AND REFUGEES

Communities created by immigrants from the Middle East and the Arab world are part of the new urban mosaic brought about by changes in U.S. immigration law in 1965.[1] Once country quotas were eliminated, migration from the Arab world and Middle East increased dramatically. These immigrants and their children have changed the physical and social landscape of many American cities, particularly Chicago. Cook County, which encompasses Chicago and its inner ring of suburbs, has the third largest Arab population, the largest Assyrian population, and the largest concentrated Palestinian population in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 2003b). At the same time, the migration of Arabs, Assyrians, Armenians, and others from this region began long before 1965. Twenty-first-century Chicago communities have been shaped in part by the institutions and relationships built by earlier migrants from the Arab world.

During the Great Migration that occurred between 1880 and 1924, more than 95,000 Arabs migrated to the United States from "Greater Syria" (present-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine/Israel), as well as smaller numbers of Arabs from Yemen, Iraq, Morocco, and Egypt.[2] Thousands of Assyrians came to the United States from Persia (now Iran) during the late 1800s. They were later joined by Assyrians from Turkey and Iraq. Arabs and Assyrians built churches and established newspapers in nineteenth-century America. The first Arab-American mosques were built early in the twentieth-century. By 1924, about 200,000 first and second generation Arabs were living in the United States, the vast majority Christians and of peasant origins (Hitti 1924).

A series of laws passed by the U.S. Congress in 1917, 1921, and 1924 caused immigration from all but northern and western Europe to slow to a trickle. Each Arab country was given a maximum quota of 100 new immigrants per year. Only the wives and dependent children of U.S. citizens could migrate to the United States without being blocked by these quotas. Migration from the Middle East and Arab world continued in small numbers in the intervening years, until it began to surge in the late 1960s. The Arab immigrants who came after 1965 differed in a number of significant ways from earlier ones: A majority of them were Muslim rather than Christian, their origins were both urban and rural, their trades and professions were varied, and many were highly educated. They came at a time when the world was increasingly more connected, their departures were not necessarily complete or permanent, and, rather than escaping strife, global strife came to be centered on their lives in the United States.

Chicago's earliest Arab communities were established by Syrian-Lebanese and Palestinian immigrants.[3] Recorded history places their initial settlement in the city during the late nineteenth-century, following their success in trading goods from the Holy Land at the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition. Syrian-Lebanese men and women largely engaged in wholesale and retail trade. The Palestinians

were predominantly urban peddlers, supplied by local Syrian-Lebanese businesses and New York Palestinian wholesalers. Their primary trade routes early in the twentieth-century were among the newly emerging black communities on Chicago's South Side (Al-Tahir 1952). Assyrians in Chicago worked in skilled trades (laborers, masons, carpenters, painters, tailors), in the service economy (cooks, waiters, and hotel staff), and as factory workers.

By 1920, Chicago's Arab immigrant community had three notable residential clusters, all on the south side of the city. Syrian-Lebanese Christian families lived near 12th and California and 63rd and Kedzie. A mostly male and Muslim community of Palestinians lived in boarding houses near 18th and Michigan. The Arabs were religiously diverse, including Melkite Catholics (Eastern Rite), Maronite Catholics (Roman Rite), Greek Orthodox Christians, and Sunni Muslims, although Christians were in the majority.

RACE AND RELIGION INFORM RESIDENTIAL AND OCCUPATIONAL INTEGRATION

The residential and occupational trajectories of the Syrian-Lebanese and Palestinians were partly shaped by ideas about race that existed during the early twentieth-century and the dominant view that the United States was a Christian country. "Arabians" and "Syrians," as Arabs were often called, were considered Caucasian and therefore "white" in the racial taxonomies developed by American ethnologists. In some places however, they were prohibited from naturalizing because they were seen as not white.

Of course, strictly speaking, race is not an objective category, and the very concept is socially constructed. "Arab" is neither a racial or national category; it is a cultural and linguistic group. Arabs are people who speak Arabic and share a tradition of Arab culture, values, and history. Before western hegemony, Arab-Islamic societies were the genesis of significant scientific, mathematical, philosophical, astronomical, architectural, and literary development. Globally connected and pan-"racial," their knowledge was eventually passed on to a reawakening Europe. Categorizing people by race and nationality cannot phenotypically capture Arabs because they span the color continuum from white to black. Similarly, the 22 Arab nation-states (including Palestine) extend over the continents of Africa and Asia. Arab countries are also multiethnic and multi-religious, home to diverse groups who share to varying degrees Arabic language and culture. In American society, however, race is an important framing construct, so whether Arabs are a racial group or not is irrelevant; their position on the racial continuum is real in its outcomes.

According to Al-Tahir's (1952) research and interpretation of events as they unfolded in Chicago, the Syrian-Lebanese Christians embraced the whiteness that was offered to them, although not without facing the prejudices and obstacles experienced by other white ethnics at the time. As part of their assimilation, they shunned conducting business in Chicago's black neighborhoods. They followed the path of other "white ethnics": The second generation intermarried extensively with European-origin Christians, abandoned the trading and shopkeeping occupational niche, experienced upward economic mobility, and became residentially dispersed across Chicago and its suburbs.

Palestinian Muslims, on the other hand, saw themselves as sojourners who planned to return to Palestine, with their religious difference from mainstream American society contributing to this intention. Documentation is scarce about how they were viewed and treated by members of dominant, white Christian society in Chicago, but we know that they did not see themselves as part of the dominant culture and did not bring their families from Palestine to Chicago. According to Al-Tahir, as sojourners and Muslims, they were not interested in participating in American racial conflicts. They lived on the edge of or within the expanding Black Belt of Chicago. They peddled goods and opened food and dry goods stores in African American communities. They shared this retail turf with Jews and Italians, who left these areas after the riots of the 1960s. Sociologist Edna Bonacich's (1973) characterization of a "middleman minority" applies well to Palestinian Muslims of the time. They

were a group who represented neither the dominant nor the subordinate; they could deal with both but were part of neither. Living in modest conditions in boarding houses or behind or near their stores in African American communities, by the 1940s, they were residentially scattered from 18th to 45th Streets and from Lake Michigan to Cottage Grove.

CHICAGO ESTABLISHED AS A DIASPORIC HOME FOR ASSYRIANS AND PALESTINIANS

Chicago's early Palestinian and Assyrian communities laid the foundations of the largest concentrated Palestinian and Assyrian diaspora communities in the United States. Assyrians are Aramaic-speaking Christians who share a deeply rooted culture and language developed in historic Assyria, an area currently part of northern Iraq, southeastern Turkey, and northwestern Iran, roughly contiguous to the boundaries of historic Kurdistan. Assyrians from Iraq and those who resettled in other Arab countries speak Arabic and share Arab culture, but consider themselves historically distinct from Arabs.

Assyrian dispersion began in earnest when they fled Ottoman Turkey in 1915, following persecution and massacres. The Allies had enlisted them, a minority group, to help defeat the Turks and promised them post-war autonomy in return. In 1918, the Turks attacked them again, in the Persian region of Azerbaijan. When World War I ended and the Allies were victorious, Assyrians were not allowed to re-enter Turkey. They were resettled by the British in Iraq, but denied autonomy. Historic Assyrian areas conquered in war were split by the Allied powers between Turkey and Iraq, with Britain ensuring that the oil-rich Mosul area went to its colony Iraq. Upon Iraqi independence (1932), Assyrian leaders again demanded a homogeneous location and autonomy within Iraq. The Iraqis refused, and thousands of Assyrians left Iraq for French-controlled Syria and Lebanon. When some of them returned for their families, they were attacked and shot by northern Iraqi forces, resulting in a third mass killing of Assyrians (1933).

Since this time, most Assyrian immigrants in the United States have come from Iraq or from Arab countries of secondary exile. The flight of Assyrians from the Middle East continues, and the majority have settled in metropolitan Chicago, largely on Chicago's North Side. Statistically, Assyrians represent a large share of immigrants from Iraq and persons who declare Iraq as their country of origin in the census. Although considerable commercial and professional interaction occurs between the Arab and Assyrian communities on the North Side, their private and institutional community lives are largely distinct. Since, unfortunately, this author does not have the expertise necessary to write about their recent and current status, they will not be discussed in detail in the rest of this chapter.

The outcome of World War I also heralded the future of Palestinians, one that would send them migrating around the world for the next 90 years. While promising independence to the Arabs in return for their military and intelligence support (the topic of the film *Lawrence of Arabia*), the British also promised to support the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine (Balfour Declaration), providing it did not prejudice the already existing Arab population of Palestine. When the State of Israel was created in 1948, some 800,000 Palestinians became refugees (Khalidi 1992). Although most of them fled to neighboring countries, the United States Congress passed two Refugee Relief Acts for Palestine Refugees, in 1953 (the first American immigration law to specifically mention refugees as a type of immigrant) and in 1957. Nearly 3,000 Palestinian refugees, Christian and Muslim, were admitted to the United States under these acts.

When Palestinians who were already in the United States brought their wives and children to live with them during the 1950s, boarding houses and rooms behind stores were not seen as fit for family residence. In Chicago, Palestinian families began moving into homes and apartments just west of the South Side Black Belt in which they worked. In the ensuing years, they would continue to move south and west into transitional neighborhoods being abandoned by whites. By the 1970s, the Palestinian community had reached the Gage Park and Chicago Lawn

areas of Chicago's southwest side. These areas continue to be home to an increasing number of new Arab immigrants—largely Palestinians. In 2005, the southwest side and southwest suburbs of Chicago were home to the largest concentration of Arab families in metropolitan Chicago and the largest concentration of Palestinians in the United States.

The 1950s and 1960s also mark the beginning of the Arab brain drain, when Egyptians, Iraqis, Syrians, Lebanese, Palestinians, and smaller numbers of other Arabs came to the United States for their college and post-graduate educations, principally in medicine, engineering, physics, and radiology, with a smaller number in the social sciences. Many accepted professional positions in the United States after completing their educations. They made important contributions to the emergence and growth of Arab American community institutions and national Arab American organizations. In Chicago, these figures included persons such as law professor M. Cherif Bassiouni, political science professors Ghada Talhami and Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, and historian Hassan Haddad. The best-known national figure was literary scholar and author Edward Said.

GROWTH AND DIVERSITY IN CHICAGO'S ARAB COMMUNITIES

According to the data from Immigration and Naturalization Service, between 1965 and 2000, more than 630,000 Arabs immigrated to the United States. Some 8 percent of them declared Illinois as their place of intended residence, including 15 percent of all Palestinians–Jordanians, and 13 percent of all Iraqis. Changes to U.S. immigration law in 1965—the removal of country quotas, family reunification preferences, and immigrant visas for persons with skills needed in the United States—contributed to changes in the size and character of the new Arab immigrants. Later legislation offered refugee visas to Assyrians, Iraqis, Somalis, and Sudanese. Assyrians, Libyans, and some other Arabs became eligible for political asylum, and Lebanese and Palestinians from Kuwait received temporary protected status. Although they are the largest refugee population in the world, Palestinian refugees have not been declared eligible for post-1965 refugee visas.

TABLE 14.1. Major Arab Immigrant Groups to the United States by Nationality: 1965–2000

Country of birth	Number of immigrants	Percent of group
Lebanon	122,291	24
Egypt	114,812	22
Jordan & Palestine	113,117	22
Iraq	87,499	17
Syria	62,610	12
Yemen	9,959	2
Total	510,288	100

Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service, Country of Birth Data.

Six Arab countries accounted for 81 percent of all Arab immigrants to the United States during this period—Lebanon, Jordan–Palestine, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen (Table 14.1), largely the same places from which the earliest Arab immigrants came, with the exception of Egypt.[4] The remaining Arab immigrants include Sudanese, Moroccans, Libyans, Bahrainis, Omanis, Tunisians, Algerians, Kuwaitis, Saudis, and small numbers of immigrants from other Arab countries. Mirroring the turn of the twentieth-century pattern, Lebanese are the largest Arab immigrant group in the post-1965 period, although Illinois is one of few states in which persons of Lebanese and Syrian descent are outnumbered by Arabs from other countries (Census 2000). If Palestinians could be accurately counted, their numbers would surely surpass those for Egyptians. Because more than 60 percent of the Palestinian people live in diaspora, they are statistically mixed in with other Arab groups, making the true extent of their presence in the United States difficult to measure.[5]

Illinois was the place of intended settlement for 44,633 immigrants from Arab countries between 1972 and 2000. Eighty-five percent of these immigrants were from the seven main countries of Arab migration. Thirty-three percent were either Palestinian or Jordanian, and 25 percent were Iraqi, a large proportion of whom are Assyrians (Table 14.2). In some years, 20 percent of all Palestinian-Jordanian

TABLE 14.2. Arab Immigrants to Illinois, Cumulative Patterns: 1972–2000

Country of birth	Number of immigrants	Percent of United States	Group as percent of main Arab immigrants	Group as percent of all Arab immigrants
Jordan–Palestine	14,701	15	39	33
Iraq	11,247	13	30	25
Syria	4,043	6	11	9
Lebanon	3,763	3	10	8
Egypt	3,626	3	10	8
Yemen	737	7	2	2
Total Selected Countries	38,117	7	100	85
Total All Arab Countries	44,633	8		100

Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service.

immigrants to the United States and 25 percent of all Iraqis chose Illinois as their initial location.

Viewed from another perspective, among Arab immigrants declaring their intention to settle in Illinois, Palestinians and Jordanians are the principle group throughout the entire post-1965 period. During the early 1980s and, to a lesser degree in the mid 1990s, they are followed relatively closely by Iraqis (Assyrians, Arabs, and Kurds). During other periods, Palestinians–Jordanians stand alone in their dominance, composing some 39 to 45 percent of all immigrants from Arab countries intending to settle in Illinois. Their figures are even larger when we add the 3 to 4 percent of "Kuwaitis" (mostly Palestinians born in Kuwait). Table 14.3 also indicates that Arab migration to Illinois has become more diverse since the 1990s; the five main Arab groups fell to 71 percent of all intended immigrants by 2000. Eighty-five percent of the Arabs and 99 percent of the Assyrians counted by Census 2000 live in the nine-county Chicago metropolitan area (PMSA) (Paral 2004).

TABLE 14.3. Arab Immigrants Intending to Resettle in Illinois (National Group as a Percentage of All Arab Immigrants Intending to Resettle in Illinois)

Country of Birth	1972	1980	1986	1995	2000
Jordan–Palestine	45	36	39	31	31
Iraq	16	35	15	26	16
Egypt	15	10	12	9	6
Lebanon	10	8	11	8	5
Syria	6	6	9	5	10
Kuwait	–	2	3	4	4
Total	97	97	89	83	71

Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service.

The Arab and Assyrian communities of metropolitan Chicago have grown in recent decades in large part because of war, ethnic cleansing, and military occupation in their native countries. In addition to Palestinians, Assyrians, and post-1990 Iraqi refugees, growth in the Lebanese and Yemeni communities is also partly due to these conditions. For all these groups, family migration has been the dominant pattern. Families come seeking safety, stability, better work opportunities, a better life for their children, and for some, the capacity to generate enough capital to support family left back home. Globalization of trade, relatively low local salaries, and slow economic development have made life increasingly expensive in much of the Arab world. These conditions impel people to migrate for economic reasons. Arabs vary in their opinions as to whether life in the United States is qualitatively better than life in their home countries, but most agree that it is economically better (Cainkar, Abunimah, and Raei 2004).

Currently, more than half of the Arab population in Illinois is native-born, although this percentage is lower among Iraqis (25 percent), Jordanians (40 percent), and Assyrians 37 percent (Paral 2004). Youths under the age of 18 comprise about one-third of Arabs and

25 percent of Assyrians in Illinois and the Chicago PMSA. Still, it is surprising how many Arab Americans one finds living in the Arab world. Alienation and dehumanization are continuing problems that drive many Arab families back to their countries of origin, migrating and returning in circular patterns at different points of their life cycle (Cainkar, Abunimah, and Raei 2004).

The post-9/11 period brought about some new trends in Arab migration. Thousands of Arab families left the United States in response to Attorney General Ashcroft's Special Registration program for Arab and Muslim men, many voluntarily and some by force (Cainkar 2003). Other families left because of the hostile climate towards Arabs and Muslims. The proportion of Arabs able to come to the United States for study and work has decreased dramatically since 9/11 (Cainkar 2004b).

COUNTRY MIGRATION PROFILES

The earliest Palestinian immigrants were largely unskilled peasants from villages in the Jerusalem, Ramallah, and Bethlehem areas of Palestine. Because most of these migrants sent remittances to family back home, relatives who followed them to Chicago were a bit more skilled and educated than their predecessors. The majority of the Palestinians migrating in the 1965–80 period, and a significant proportion of those coming later, were relatives of the early Palestinian immigrants. Some of them came from their home of second migration: Jordan. Except for Palestinians in Jordan, most other Palestinians in the Middle East are stateless; without passports, they cannot travel easily. In the 1980s, Palestinian students came to the United States in numbers that exceeded immigrants. Their goals were largely to study engineering and other specializations needed in the Arab Gulf countries so that they could land lucrative jobs. Many ended up staying in the United States when their job options in these countries closed down, thus starting a new family migration. When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990, some 350,000 Palestinians were living there. The overwhelming majority were expelled once Iraq was forced out. Many of those holding visitor visas came to the United States and were able to stay under Temporary Protected Status until the mid 1990s. Then, unable to return to Palestine because of Israeli rules for Arabs, they became part of the small group of "out of status" Palestinians living in the United States. Those who did not adjust their status by the fall of 2001 were expelled by the Department of Homeland Security. Few Palestinians have been granted student visas since the 1990–91 Gulf War. This measure to release economic pressure on Palestinians living under Israeli occupation ended when their employment opportunities in the Gulf were limited.

Jordanian migrants to the United States and Chicago who are not originally Palestinian are predominantly Christians from cities and towns in central and northern Jordan, such as Salt, Irbid, Ajloun, and Fuheis. Many are relatives of the smaller wave of Jordanians that came to the United States during the 1950s. Jordanians are largely participants in the Arab shop-keeping niche, although some have professional and technical jobs.

Iraqis include three major subgroups: Assyrians; brain-drain Iraqi Arabs and their families, who began migrating during the 1950s seeking education or professional employment, or who fled the Saddam Hussein regime in the 1970s and early 1980s; and the post 1990–91 Gulf War refugees, principally Shia Muslims but also Sunnis and Kurds, most of whom had limited educational and socioeconomic means. Illinois received the fourth largest number of these 33,000 refugees; some 2,200 Iraqi refugees and asylees were initially settled in Illinois between 1991 and 1999, the overwhelming majority in Cook County. In 2003, just prior to invading Iraq, the Bush administration launched an initiative to interview 50,000 Iraqis in the United States. Many of the Iraqi refugees were recruited to work in the Pentagon or with American forces in Iraq.

Egyptians did not begin migrating to the United States in significant numbers until the 1950s. Although many Egyptians live in metropolitan Chicago, it is not a major hub of Egyptian resettlement. Egyptian immigrants tend to be families of highly educated

professionals. Many are Muslims but, a large number of Coptic Christians and some Protestants are also present. Unlike other Arab immigrants, substantial numbers of Egyptians entered the United States on visas granted because of their skills, not their relationship to an American citizen.

Post-1965 Syrian immigrants are of three groups: relatives of earlier Arab immigrants, mostly Christians; well-educated Syrians, such as doctors, pharmacists, and scientists, seeking better job opportunities in the United States; and students who came to the United States for higher education. The latter two groups are both Christian and Muslim. Lebanese migration to Illinois in the post 1965 era is relatively small and quite varied. Yemenis are the sixth largest group of Arabs to migrate to the Chicago area. Their migration increased after 1990, when about 1 million Yemenis lost their jobs as a result of the 1990–91 Gulf War. Yemenis are a rather unique group among modern Arab immigrants because more than 80 percent of them are unaccompanied men who come to the United States to work, save money, and support their families in Yemen. The main Yemeni occupation in metropolitan Chicago is urban shopkeeper.

AREAS OF RESIDENCE, SHOPPING, AND WORSHIP

Map 14.1 (see color insert) indicates areas of Arabs and Assyrians concentration in Cook and DuPage counties. The southwest side of Chicago and its southwest suburbs are the most densely populated Arab areas, with large concentrations of Palestinians and Jordanians, as well as some Yemenis and a small numbers of other Arabs. The visibility of their businesses, such as grocery stores, bakeries, butchers, restaurants, insurance agencies, realtors, barbers, beauticians, doctors, dentists, and lawyers, attests to their presence.

The North Side is more ethnically diverse than the southwest side and suburbs, being populated by Iraqis, Assyrians, Palestinians, Jordanians, Syrians, and Lebanese. Notable concentrations of Arabs and Assyrians live in Albany Park and West Rogers Park. A number of Assyrian associations are headquartered in these neighborhoods. A major Arab and Assyrian commercial district runs from Montrose to north of Lawrence Avenue on Kedzie. Middle Eastern cuisine, music, dance, and flavored tobacco smoked in water pipes are increasing in popularity in Chicago urban culture. The concentration of Arabs near O'Hare airport is mainly Iraqis and other Arabs with limousine and taxi businesses. Arabs are also notable in the middle and upper-middle class suburbs of Oakbrook, Bloomingdale, Schaumberg, and Naperville. These areas are home to highly educated, professional Arabs of Egyptian, Syrian, Lebanese, Palestinian, and Jordanian origin.

The Iraqi Shia Muslim community has a small storefront mosque on west Addison Avenue. Two other North Side mosques with Arab congregants are the Muslim Community Center on Elston and a new mosque on Belmont. Mosques in the city of Chicago serve a range of indigenous African American and immigrant Muslim communities (Map 14.2, color insert). Four Assyrians churches stand on Chicago's North Side. Arab Christians are a range of denominations. Their religious institutions include St. George Orthodox Church in Cicero, St. Mary's Orthodox Church in Alsip, St. John the Baptist Syrian Orthodox Church in Villa Park, St. Mary's Catholic Church in Elmhurst, St. Mark's Coptic Church in Burr Ridge, St. Mary's Coptic Church in Palatine, and St. Elias Lutheran Church on the city's North Side. Some 30 mosques in Chicago's suburbs serve multi-ethnic Muslim congregations (Map 14.1).

EDUCATION, OCCUPATIONS, AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

Arab immigrants have a wide range of income, education, and skill levels. Like other immigrants, the skills and financial resources they bring with them and the social capital they find where they settle strongly shape their economic fates. The national profile for Arabs and Assyrians shows that they are well integrated into the American economy. Nationally,

they have a higher median household income ($47,000) than the overall American population ($42,000). They also have a greater proportion of persons with bachelor's degrees or higher (40 percent versus 24 percent).[6] Seventeen percent of them have post-graduate degrees, compared to 9 percent of the overall American population. Their rate of persons with at least a high school diploma parallels the overall U.S. rate at 85 percent. Some 64 percent of Arabs and Assyrians are in the United States labor force, similar to the national average.

In Illinois, the median Arab household income as measured by Census 2000 is $46,590, close to the statewide median. Egyptian, Lebanese, Syrian, and Assyrian medians are higher, whereas those for other groups are lower (Table 14.4). About 16 percent of Arabs in Illinois live below the poverty level, higher than the statewide norm of 11 percent. Table 14.4 shows that the poor are concentrated among Iraqis, Palestinians, and Jordanians (mostly ethnic Palestinians).

Occupational patterns for Arabs in Illinois (and by extension metropolitan Chicago) mirror national patterns. Arabs are overrepresented in managerial, professional, sales, and office occupations. Seventy-two percent of Arabs are employed in these occupations. Another 13 percent work in transportation and production, and 10 percent in service (Paral 2004). Palestinians, Jordanians, Iraqis, Assyrians, and "Arabs" (mainly Palestinians) are less likely to work as professionals than others from the Arab world and are more likely to be a spectrum of managers (largely of their own businesses), sales workers (largely in co-ethnic businesses), and transportation workers (taxi, limousine, and trucks). An analysis of 1990 Census PUMS data organized by industry showed that 79 percent of employed Arabs living on the southwest side of Chicago and 75 percent of those in the southwest suburbs worked in the retail and professional sectors of the economy, the vast majority in retail. The same study (Cainkar 1998) showed that of Arabs employed in sales, 76 percent of southwest suburban Arabs were supervisors and owners, whereas 16 percent were workers. The opposite held for the southwest side of the city, where 65 percent of Arabs in sales occupations were workers whereas only 35 percent were supervisors and proprietors. Compared to Arabs in the United States as a whole, the concentration of Arabs in retail occupations in Chicago and Cook County is striking (Table 14.5).

TABLE 14.4. Arabs and Assyrians in Illinois: Median Household Income and Poverty Rates

Group	Median household income	Percent of persons below poverty level
All Arabs	$46,595	15.8
Lebanese	$57,656	7.2
Syrians	$57,422	9.2
Egyptians	$56,944	7.9
Assyrians	$49,027	8.3
All Illinois	$46,590	10.7
Iraqi	$45,991	19.9
Palestinian	$39,804	18.3
"Arab/Arabic"*	$39,349	20.5
Jordanian	$32,703	17.6

*Persons with this response tend to be Palestinians, according to earlier research by the author. Includes many Palestinians.

Source: Census 2000 as tabulated by Rob Paral, 2004.

THE ARAB SHOPKEEPING NICHE

Arab employment and ownership in trading and shopkeeping, a niche established 100 years ago by Lebanese and Palestinian immigrants, remains strong in twenty-first-century Chicago. Most second-generation Lebanese moved out of this niche and into white-collar and professional occupations, but Palestinians have stayed in it over the past century. They were joined in the 1950s by Jordanians and later by Yemenis. By the early 1970s, Arabs owned nearly 20 percent of all small grocery and liquor stores in Chicago, although they were less than 1 percent of Chicago's population (Blackistone 1981). Most were located in African American neighborhoods, where Palestinians had historically worked in trade. Contributing to the Arab retail expansion in these areas was the void left when corporate chains and small merchants pulled

TABLE 14.5. Employed Arabs by Industry, 1990

Industry	Southwest side (%)	Southwest suburbs (%)	North side (%)	United States (%)
Retail	67	55	45	24
Professional and related service	12	20	9	26
Transportation, communication, utilities	12	5	8	6
Business and repair service	7	7	3	5
Personal service	0	0	13	3
Manufacturing durable	2	13	4	7

Source: 1990 United States Census, as tabulated in Cainkar 1998.

their investments out of these neighborhoods in response to the rioting and unrest that followed decades of racial discrimination. Many local properties were damaged and looted, chain stores and small Jewish and Italian merchants left, and Palestinians and a growing community of Jordanians filled the void. Institutional lenders were largely unwilling to provide loans for businesses in these areas, limiting the possibility of African American investment. With years of experience in urban trading and shopkeeping, Arab entrepreneurs with access to loans knew how to survive in small businesses where costs were high, inventory small, and personal safety risky. They had two significant advantages over local African Americans: access to capital through family, friends, and dairy companies; and access to nearly free family labor—siblings and offspring willing work 10 to12 hour days for little compensation and no benefits. Since the 1990s, Palestinians, Jordanians, and Iraqis have ventured into new commercial arenas, such as gas stations, fast food restaurants, taxi driving, and limousine services.

COUNTING PEOPLE FROM THE ARAB WORLD: THE EFFECT OF RACE, DIASPORA, AND CRIMINALIZATION

Census 2000 counted 52,191 persons of Arab ancestry and 15,664 persons of Assyrian ancestry in Illinois, of which 55 percent of the former and 37 percent of the latter were born in the United States.[7] The overwhelming majority live in Cook and DuPage counties, where Census 2000 counted 40,196 persons of Arab ancestry and 14,428 persons of Assyrian ancestry. No one in Chicago's Arab community accepts these numbers as accurate. Polling and research firm Zogby International estimated that at least 177,000 people from Arabic-speaking countries live in Cook and DuPage counties, including Assyrians, Somalis, and Sudanese, who the Census Bureau counts separately. In 1998, the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, Advisory Council on Arab Affairs estimated the metropolitan Chicago Arab population at about 150,000, plus about 65,000 Assyrians.

These discrepancies are not new. In 1980, the U.S. Census counted 25,288 persons of Palestinian ancestry in the United States, while a 1984 Census Bureau study estimated that there were at least 87,700 Palestinians in the United States, a 350 percent difference (Roof and Kinsella 1985). In 1986, demographer Janet Lippman Abu-Lughod (1986) estimated there were some 130,000 Palestinians in the United States.[8] Four years later, the 1990 Census counted only 48,019 Palestinians. This discrepancy emerges again when comparing the number of Palestinian and Jordanian immigrants to Illinois between 1972 and 2000 (14,701) and the number of immigrant *and* U.S.-born Palestinians and Jordanians in Illinois counted by Census 2000 (11,727). For a population that has low levels of permanent return migration, relatively high birth rates, low out-migration to other states, and in which more than half of the population is U.S.-born, one would expect the census figure to be at least three times that of the migration cohort. The sociological issues that surround counting Arabs are discussed below, when we view these discrepancies through the

lens of social and political factors. In the case of Arabs, undercounting may reflect the convergence of the global and the local.

COUNTED AS WHITE: THE RACIALIZATION OF ARABS

Many Arabs in the United States say that they are not effectively counted by the census because, unlike other minority groups, no category exists for them on the census form. This is not exactly true. Arabs are officially considered white and are expected to check the Caucasian box on census forms. This act renders them invisible. Arabs can be counted on the long form's open-ended ancestry question, similar to the way in which other "white" groups (mostly Europeans) are counted. Because the long form is sent only to a 17 percent sample of the U.S. population, small groups tend to be undercounted through this method. More important, since the vast majority of Arabs never see the short form, their belief that the census does not count them is sustained. In the context of other deterrents (discussed later), this belief may lead to low levels of compliance.

Issues of race are germane to counting Arabs because Arabs are forced into a category with which fewer and fewer identify, and in which they cannot be distinguished from Europeans, with whom their American experience has much less in common than it did 100 years ago. Arabs and Assyrians lie on a historically floating, liminal position on the racial construct continuum. Considerable evidence suggests that, since the 1970s, Arabs have been increasingly negatively racialized in the United States (Samhan 1999). While still officially white, Arabs have been progressively cast as persons with values and customs different from and inferior to those held in high regard in American society. Over the passage of time, the negative racialization of Arabs has intensified, so that Arabs have become a symbolic outcast group. A 2004 study of Arab Muslims in metropolitan Chicago by this author reveals that some 65 percent of interviewees do not consider themselves white and another 14.5 percent believe no appropriate racial construct exists for multiracial Arabs.

COUNTING ARAB ANCESTRIES: GOVERNMENT POLICIES, TRUST, AND THE CRIMINALIZATION OF ARABS

Studies have shown that Arabs in the United States fear government reporting mechanisms (such as the census) because of government harassment. Since the early 1970s, the FBI has spied on Arab American community leaders and activists. In 1988, the *Los Angeles Times* disclosed a draft Department of Justice plan to round up Arab and Muslim aliens and hold them in a camp in Oakdale, Louisiana (Suleiman 1999). Their fears of being pinpointed for special measures, as were the Japanese during World War II, came to life in 2004, when a Department of Homeland Security staff member requested a Census Bureau report of persons of Arab ancestry data organized by zip code (Clemetson 2004).[9] The Decennial Census Advisory Committee called this action the "modern day equivalent of its pinpointing of Japanese-American communities when internment camps were opened during World War II" (Lipton 2004). Current research shows that a large proportion of Arab Muslims living in metropolitan Chicago fear internment or removal in the event of another terrorist attack on the United States. Despite a subsequent revision of Census Bureau policy, the usefulness of census data for counting Arabs in the United States will likely decrease further as a result of these revelations.

THE MEANING OF PLACES OF BIRTH IN DIASPORA POPULATIONS

Counting, categorizing, and describing immigrants from the Arab world are tasks that are especially difficult for two large diasporic populations, Palestinians and Assyrians. Neither population can be identified strictly in reference to a place of birth because large segments of both groups live in exile. For example, an analysis of 1990 Census PUMS data for the southwest side neighborhoods of Chicago that are home to Palestinians and Jordanians showed the following places of birth for persons of Arab ancestry: Jordan, 31 percent; Palestine,

27 percent; Israel, 21 percent; Saudi Arabia, 10 percent; Kuwait, 8 percent; Lebanon, 1 percent; and Egypt, 1 percent. The persons born in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Israel are not Saudis, Kuwaitis, and Israeli Jews; they are Palestinians. Similarly, Assyrians may be born in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, among other places. Furthermore, many Arabs report Arab ethnicity and not a nationality group, such as Lebanese, Palestinian, or Egyptian, making profiles of Arabs by nationality problematic. An examination of 1990 census data for Arabs on the southwest side of Chicago, which is mainly inhabited by Palestinians and some Jordanians, showed that 62 percent reported "Arab" as their ancestry (Cainkar 1998).

In an action that corresponds to their current global status, the Census Bureau eradicated the Palestine category altogether for Census 2000; persons listing Palestine as their place of birth were changed to "Asia not specified."[10] Indeed, neither the U.S. Census Bureau nor the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has a nationality, country of birth, or country of last permanent residence category entitled Palestinian or Palestine (except when tabulating the write-in ancestry responses). 1957 was the last year Palestine existed as a country in these official U.S. data sources.

Because Palestinians are the largest Arab population in metropolitan Chicago, estimating their number is important but extremely difficult. Census 2000 reports 11,727 Palestinians and Jordanians in Illinois (excluding the potentially large number of Palestinians and Jordanians who identified their ancestry as Arab). If we assume that 33 percent of all Arabs in Illinois are of Palestinian–Jordanian ancestry (based on migration, Table 14.2), they would total 17,223 using Census 2000 data and 72,600 using Zogby estimates (220,000 in Illinois). The same figures for Cook and DuPage counties would be 13, 265 (Census) and 58,410 (Zogby). Demographers who have studied Palestinians assume that about 350,000 Palestinians live in the United States today. If 15 percent of all Palestinians live in Illinois (Table 14.2), the figure for Palestinians in Illinois would be about 52,000.

THE GLOBAL AND THE LOCAL

These racialization, criminalization, and erasure processes and the ways they are interpreted and acted upon by Arabs, indicate the intersection of politics and social processes. They show how something as seemingly simple as filling out a form becomes politicized. Perhaps the most striking aspect of these processes is the way in which they are set in motion by global, as opposed to domestic, matters. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, American popular culture produced movies, video games, Halloween costumes, and talk shows that homogenized and dehumanized Arabs (Suleiman 1999; Stockton 1995; Shaheen 1984). Their targets were not the Arabs of America, although these portrayals could not help but color and damage their lives; the representations were of overseas Arabs. Their infusion throughout American popular culture had the effect of discouraging the American public from reflecting on American policies in the Arab world, especially in Iraq and Palestine. School textbooks described Arabs as desert wanderers, terrorists, and a defeated people. The discourse of the culturally inferior Arab had become part of American popular culture. These domestic discourses and representations of Arabs, later expanded to Muslims, show that racialization is not a process set in motion by domestic matters alone; it can be a corollary to a global strategy.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AND COALITION-BUILDING: GLOBAL AFFAIRS PENETRATE LOCAL LIVES

Following the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and part of Egypt, a battle was waged in the American media for the hearts and minds of the American people. The U.S. government was by this time a global power and had thrown its support to the Israeli side of the conflict. Palestinians and Arabs were portrayed by the mainstream media as uncivilized, violence-prone barbarians (Suleiman 1999).[11] When Arab Americans began exercising their rights to oppose these characterizations, they

discovered that their voices were locked out in a one-sided media battle. The Association of Arab American University Graduates (AAUG) was founded in 1970 to provide the American public with an alternative scholarly analysis of the situation, but it too was ignored by mainstream media. Arab academics reported facing pressures to conform to accepted paradigms about Arabs and the Middle East and faced struggles for promotion and tenure in the social sciences and humanities.

In Chicago, members of the Arab community who were shocked and traumatized by the flow of refugees and new Israeli military occupation reached out to local Arab academics for analyses. At the same time, academics sought out the comfort of an Arab community. A bridge was built between the Chicago's Arab intelligentsia and its Arab community, fostered largely by the United Holy Land Fund and later by the Arab American Community Center (now Arab American Action Network). Finding their political and social integration into American society blocked by stereotypes, media censure, government harassment, and denigration of their political aspirations, Arab American communities became fairly insular. Their isolation from mainstream American society nourished their concentration in the Arab shop-keeping niche, where contact with white American institutions and prejudice was limited. The family and community institutions encouraged pride in Arab culture among an American-born generation that heard quite different messages from the outside world and at school. Family and community cohesiveness were evidenced by low rates of criminality, broken families, or substance abuse. Transnational issues permeated American Jewish communities as well, but they were the victors, they were not stateless, and their advocacy did not lead to dehumanization and exclusion, as did Arab advocacy of the Palestinian cause. These political conflicts never spilled over into conflicts between Arabs and Jews in Chicago; some Jewish institutions welcomed Arab speakers and Arab organizations welcomed Jewish supporters.[12]

These issues did, however, affect the social and civic integration of Chicago's Arab American community. Locally and nationally, elected officials and power brokers shunned Arab Americans, refusing their electoral support and returning their campaign donations. Arab American institutions faced closed doors at philanthropic foundations and city government. In Chicago, this political exclusion changed after the 1984 electoral victory of Mayor Harold Washington; Arab Americans had formed part of the multi-racial, multi-ethnic progressive coalition that elected him. Chicago's Arab community was institutionally recognized when Mayor Washington established advisory councils for Chicago's racial, ethnic, and other minority communities within the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, including one for Arabs. This inclusion was built on ties made between Arabs and progressive African American, Latino, and Asian activists, as well as relationships with Operation Push and Jesse and Jackie Jackson, who had played key roles in reducing tensions between African Americans and the Arab grocers who permeated their neighborhoods. The philanthropic block faced by Arab American community organizations ended in the mid 1990s, when the Chicago Community Trust funded a needs assessment for the Arab American community. The Arab American community was mobilized for the first time in national electoral politics as part of Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition and his 1988 democratic presidential bid. Significantly, the Coalition's platform included support for a Palestinian state. When mainstream Democrats embraced the Coalition, this plank was dropped. Although the Arab community had entered the 1990s in a better position locally, some of their strength was eroded when the progressive coalitions of the 1970s and 1980s experienced losses in power locally, nationally, and globally. The lessened power of progressive political coalitions hurt Arab American communities and interrupted their nascent social and political integration as members of people-of-color coalitions. Lack of social and political integration and the loss of a strong progressive movement hurt Arab and Muslim Americans after the September 11,2001 terrorist attacks, when their communities experienced a surge

of violent popular backlash and increased levels of domestic government repression (Cainkar 2004a).

The 1990–91 Gulf War, from which the Palestinians and the PLO emerged politically and financially weakened, led to the demise of many Palestinian community organizations in Chicago. When Palestinian community centers closed or cut back their activities, the community-wide cohesiveness that had provided newcomers and Arab American youth with pride, strength, and resilience in the face of discrimination and political disappointments started shattering. Mirroring changes overseas, the vacuum left in the wake of the destruction of nationalist institutions was filled by spirituality and religion for many, and demobilization for others.

GLOBAL ISLAMIC REVIVAL COMES TO CHICAGO

The Islamic revival movement grew in strength across the Muslim world during the 1980s and surged during the 1990s, when few alternative global movements for justice and equality were to be found, and American hegemony had risen out of the defeat and fall of communism. Islamic revival became apparent in metropolitan Chicago during the 1990s, and was evidenced by increasing levels of religiosity among immigrants and second-generation Arab Muslims, the establishment of Islamic schools and organizations, and the growth in Muslim student organizations on college campuses. Islamic revival is, for the overwhelming majority of Muslims, about faith in God and the quest for peace, justice, and equality. The growing spiritual power of Islam among Arab (and other) Muslims in metropolitan Chicago is a phenomenon with many visible markers, such as increasing mosque attendance, *Halal* meat markets, and Islamic clothing stores. Immigrant and American-born Muslim women who had never before veiled have adopted the *hijab* (head scarf), once uncommon, but now a common sight in the Chicago metropolitan area.

Following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States substantial popular and governmental backlash occurred against Arabs and Muslims in the United States. In southwest suburban Bridgeview, the largely Palestinian mosque was surrounded by hundreds of angry, flag-waving young whites, some shouting "death to the Arabs." Bridgeview police called in six suburban police departments to help maintain control. For four days, residents of the neighborhood around the mosque had to pass through checkpoints and show identification to be admitted. Although much of the post-September 11th backlash focused on Muslims and Islamic institutions, Arab Christians, Assyrian Christians, and secular Muslims have also experienced hate crimes and discrimination. In 2002, an Assyrian church on the city's North Side was firebombed and the Arab American Community Center was arsoned.

At the same time, Islamic civic and religious institutions in metropolitan Chicago stepped up their outreach, advocacy, and civic participation. Many mainstream institutions welcomed them, signaling the opening of civic and political space for American Arab and Muslim communities. Despite the fact that numerous investigations, including the Congressional 9/11 Commission, showed that no Arab American or Muslim American collaborated with or assisted the 20 hijackers from overseas, hate attacks and discrimination against Arabs and Muslims have continued. In 2004, when a group of southwest suburban Arab Muslims sought to build a mosque in an unincorporated area near Orland Park, opposition raged. The Orland Park city council (which sought to annex the land) was pressured to hold three public hearings on the matter. The matter was settled when the city council voted unanimously to annex the land slated for the mosque, thereby approving the mosque's construction permit.

Testimony given at the final Orland Park public hearing (April 2004) provides insight into the discourses of opposition to the mosque. The issues raised by most opponents had little to do with Orland Park; they were global. They invoked the war in Iraq, international terrorism, the purported violent essence of Islam, and

homeland security. The following quotes provide a sense of the context of opposition:

- "We care about America. We care about what's going on because we don't want you to bring it here. We're not saying that you'll bring it, but you must understand, that because you're tied in with this religion and a possible mosque in Orland Park, it will come to our doorstep."
- "Can you give a guarantee to me that these Muslims and their mosque are not going to be terrorists?"

CONCLUSION

Metropolitan Chicago is home to the largest Assyrian and Palestinian communities in the United States, both of which were established more than a century ago. It is also home to significant numbers of Iraqis, Egyptians, Jordanians, Syrians, Lebanese, and Yemenis. Overall, these communities are faring well economically, although pockets of poverty exist within them. The effect of more recent discrimination on those with fewer assets and less human capital remains to be seen. Their community histories reveal challenges to their social and political integration, largely caused by domestic interests in contested global issues. The post September 11th period witnessed increases in public attacks, government spying, media stereotyping, and levels of personal alienation. At the same time, numerous philanthropic and civic organizations in the Chicago area have come forward to support institutions built by Arabs, Assyrians, and Muslims. While the post September 11th period has been extremely difficult for these communities, their civic and religious institutions are more socially and politically integrated at the local level than at any other time in their history. The full social and political integration of Arabs and Assyrians into American society awaits an end to media stereotyping, an opening up to their voices in domestic debates, and peace and justice in the Middle East. The Arab and Assyrian experience in Chicago is entrenched in the local but at the same time, is intensely global.

NOTES

1. The term "Arab world" is more accurate than Middle East because it is definable. "Middle East" is a Western construct having varying definitions and boundaries. The Arab world is composed of the 22 Arab countries that form the League of Arab States.

2. Between 1916 and 1919, cross-Atlantic travel was limited by war. More than 90 percent of Arab immigrants came to the United States from other countries in the Americas. When Arabs initially boarded ships for "America," their destinations included the Caribbean, South, Central, or North America—all sites of historic Arab communities.

3. Prior to the establishment of Lebanon within former Greater Syria, one must use the term *Syrian-Lebanese* to indicate migrants from Syria and modern-day Lebanon.

4. Jordan and Palestine are combined for a number of reasons, the most important being that some 80 percent of Jordanians migrating to the United States are originally Palestinians. Other reasons have to do with passports and ways that Palestinians are counted.

5. More than 60 percent of the Palestinian population lives in diaspora, the vast majority in Arab countries, some of which have offered Palestinians citizenship. Jordan gave citizenship to the majority of 1948 and 1967 Palestinian refugees and exiles, now numbering in the millions. For a time, it gave West Bank Palestinians citizenship. Israel offered citizenship to the few hundred thousand Palestinians who managed to hold onto their land after Israeli independence. Lebanon offered citizenship to some (relatively few) Palestinian refugees, mostly Christians. The majority of "Kuwaiti" and "Saudi" immigrants are Palestinians who migrated to these countries for work and came to the United States in a third migration. Palestinians are also part of Israeli, Lebanese, and to a lesser extent Syrian and Yemeni migration. Most Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon, Syria, Gaza, and Egypt have no passports, rendering migration difficult.

6. These data are from the Arab American Institute tabulations of Census 2000 and combine all persons from Arab countries, whether Arab or Assyrian, and include Sudanese and Somalis.

7. If we add half of the Armenians to these numbers, assuming they came from Arab countries, the total number of Illinoisans from Arab countries counted by Census 2000 reaches 67,981.

8. A 15 percent rate of Palestinian settlement in Illinois using this estimate would put the approximate number of Palestinians in Illinois at 20,000 in 1986. Both of these researchers used migration

and natural increase data to produce their estimates and excluded Palestinians who migrated to the United States before 1940 and their U.S.-born descendants.

9. The data sharing on Arabs between DHS and the Census Bureau was disclosed by a Freedom of Information Act request submitted by the Electronic Privacy Information Center, a research center focused on civil liberties.

10. This is not the first time "Palestine" has disappeared in official U.S. data. See Cainkar 1998 for a much longer history.

11. This is not to deny the orientalized view of Arabs that predates this period, described so eloquently by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978).

12. This information is from my fieldwork in Chicago during the 1980s and 1990s, as well as from national records.